

Pacific Fleet Commander Keeps Eyes Below Water

Roughead Stresses Anti-Sub Technology

By Gidget Fuentes, Navy Times

SAN DIEGO - When Adm. Gary Roughead looks across the vast Pacific Ocean and weighs the threats against U.S. and allied interests, he focuses on the growing number of submarines plying the waters.

More than 250 submarines operate in the region, marked by some of the world's busiest commercial waterways and strategic straits, according to Pacific Fleet. The growth of quieter diesel boats, especially those belonging to countries not aligned with the United States, has concerned U.S. military officials.

So it's no surprise that for this four-star admiral, who took the helm of Pacific Fleet this summer, "ASW is my top priority."

Contrary to some U.S. officials and military analysts who advocate a smaller force of submarines, Roughead said, "I do not see them lessening in importance."

"A submarine is a very, very powerful weapon," he said. So Roughead is rolling ahead with the next series of the Pacific Fleet's ASW initiatives, which began this fall and run through December:

- The Abraham Lincoln strike group is training with the Swedish diesel-electric sub Gotland.
- This, fall, in Littoral Warfare Advanced Development exercises, U.S. Navy forces will pair up with Collins-class diesel-electric submarines of the Royal Australian Navy and train in shallow waters.
- Forces will sharpen tactics against advanced diesel submarines in a series of exercises - Malabar with Indian naval forces and Silent Fury with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force - that will also test ASW integration.

"We are very good at antisubmarine warfare, but we can be better," Roughead said Sept. 16 in a telephone interview with Navy Times.

Roughead wants to expand the basic antisubmarine warfare skills of the fleet. "Where's always much more to learn about the ocean and the environment in which we operate," he said.

The ASW exercises will put some new technologies to the test.

One such technology, Composeable Forcenet, is a new networking tool designed to generate and integrate information and intelligence and move both quickly. Roughead wants to know how to incorporate technologies to move information, especially with submarines moving at speed undersea, so commanders and operational planners can quickly 'make decisions.

"This is a great tool being used at multiple levels in the antisubmarine warfare game," Roughead said.

The ASW exercises will put to the test another new technology called Advanced Active Analysis Adjunct for Interactive Multi-sensor Analysis Training, a "maritime shield" that Pacific Fleet refers to as A4I.

A4I, according to the fleet, provides information about or a picture of the ocean environment to a sonar operator; identifies obstacles and avoidances, such as marine mammals picked up by sonar; and suggests to the sonar operator the best acoustic sensor to use in that particular environment.

Roughead said he's focused on finding and embracing the technological investments and on developing training, tactics and procedures that will keep the U.S. Navy at the tip of the antisubmarine warfare spear.

"The way I approach it is, rather than look at country X, Y or Z, I want to look at capabilities that exist in the subsurface realm," he said. "How do we operate against them? And how do we make sure our systems, our technology, our procedures" remain ahead of the pack?

"We want to dominate," he said.